

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION FACTSHEET Planning for a Fire-safe Millenium

There have been numerous reports regarding issues associated with the coming of the year 2000 and the operation of computers and computer driven systems. A special U.S. Senate panel, assembled to study the possible effects of the Y2K issue, released a report in March 1999 concluding there is no data to suggest the United States will experience nationwide social or economic problems. The panel did report that some disruptions may occur, but based on current information, these potential disruptions are likely to be localized and limited in scope and duration.

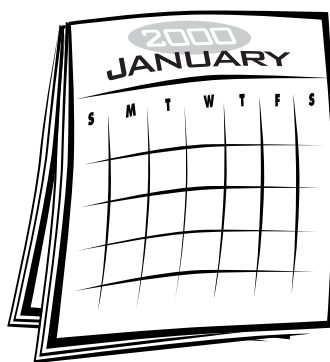
The United States Fire Administration (USFA), a directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, encourages you to prepare for potential Y2K disruptions as you would for any event that could have personal safety consequences. If Y2K system problems lead to temporary service disruption you would want to be prepared as you would for any other service disruption. As with any service disruption scenario, you can greatly reduce your chance of experiencing a fire-related fatality or injury by addressing fire safety issues beforehand.

GENERATOR SAFETY

Generators are often used during power outages, and if not properly used and maintained, they can be extremely hazardous. When using a generator remember to:

- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines.
- Only use a generator or other fuel-powered machines outside the home. Carbon monoxide fumes, released by generator, are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to

another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or "backfeed" can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.



HEATING SAFETY

Research suggests more than one-third of home fires in the United States occur during the winter months of December, January, and February. One of the reasons these months pose a magnified fire threat is due to increase use of heating sources, such as chimneys and wood

stoves. Because Y2K will occur during this time of increased fire threat, it is particularly important to follow these heating safety tips:

- Do not use the kitchen oven range to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, it can be a source of toxic fumes.
- Alternative heaters need their space. Keep anything combustible at least 3 feet away.
- Kerosene heaters may not be legal in your area and should only be used where approved by authorities.
- Make sure your alternative heaters have "tip switches" These "tip switches" are designed to automatically turn off the heater in the event they tip over.
- Only use the type of fuel recommended by the manufacturer and follow suggested guidelines.

- Remember to keep all combustible liquids away from heat sources.
- Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot.
- Refuel heaters only outdoors.
- Make sure wood stoves are properly installed, and at least 3 feet away from combustible materials. Ensure they have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby carpets, furniture or other combustible items.

LIGHTING SAFETY

- Have plenty of flashlights and extra batteries on hand in case of a power outage.
- Don't use candles for emergency lighting.

COOKING SAFETY

- In case the power fails, plan to use alternative cooking devices in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Never use open flames or grills indoors.

NEVER STOCKPILE FUEL OR FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS

- For those who feel the need to stock disaster supplies, we remind you that it is extremely dangerous to stockpile any liquids fuels such as gasoline, kerosene or lantern fluid.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT CAN HELP YOU

- Check with the fire department in your area to see if there's more information available about how your community is preparing for any potential Y2K problems.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of debris for easy access by the fire department.

REMEMBER, SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home.
- All smoke alarms should be tested monthly. All batteries should be replaced with new ones at least once a year.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Or visit the USFA web site:

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